CLEAR TYPE SERIES

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

CHARLES DICKENS

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THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

By

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CHAPTER I

OFF FOR CALIFORNIA

Captain Ravender

I was apprenticed to the sea when I was twelve years old, and I have encountered a great deal of rough weather, of one kind or another. It has always been my opinion that the man who knows only one subject is next tiresome to the man who knows no subject. Therefore, in the course of my life I have taught myself whatever I

could, and although I am not an educated man, I am able, I am thankful to say, to have an intelligent interest in most things.

A person might suppose, from reading the above, that I am in the habit of holding forth about number one. That is not the case. Just as if I were to come into a room among strangers and must either be introduced or introduce myself, so I have taken the liberty of passing these few remarks simply and plainly that it may be known who and what I am. I will add no more of the sort than that my name is William George

Ravender, that I was born at Penrith half a year after my own father was drowned, and that I am this present Christmas week of one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, fifty-six years of age.

When the rumor first went flying up and down that there was gold in California–which, as most people know, was before it was discovered in the British colony of Australia–I was in the West Indies, trading among the Islands. Being in command and likewise part-owner of a smart schooner, I had my work cut out for me, and I was doing it. Consequently, gold in Cali-

fornia was no business of mine.

But, by the time when I came home to England again, the thing was as clear as your hand held up before you at noonday. There was California gold in the museums and in the goldsmiths' shops, and the very first time I went upon 'Change, I met a friend of mine—a seafaring man like myself—with a California nugget hanging to his watch-chain. I handled it. It was as like a peeled walnut with bits unevenly broken off here and there, as ever I saw anything in my life.

I am a single man (she was

too good for this world and for me, and she died six weeks before our marriage-day); so when I am ashore, I live in my house at Poplar. My house is taken care of and kept ship-shape by an old lady who was my mother's maid before I was born.

With this old lady I lived quiet for the best part of a year, having had a long spell of it among the Islands, and having taken the fever rather badly. At last, being strong and hearty, and having read every book I could lay hold of right out, I was walking down Leadenhall Street in the City of London, thinking of

turning-to again, when I met a merchant whom I knew, from Liverpool. I chanced to lift up my eyes from looking in at a ship's chronometer in a window, and I saw him bearing down upon me.

"My dear Captain," said he. "Of all the men on earth, I wanted to see you most. I was on my way to you."

"Well!" said I. "That looks as if you *were* to see me, doesn't it?" With that I put my arm in his, and we walked an hour and more, for he had much to say to me. He had a scheme for chartering a new ship to take out cargo to the diggers and emigrants

in California, and to buy and bring back gold. Into the particulars of that scheme I will not enter, and I have no right to enter. All I say of it is, that it was a very original one, a very fine one, a very sound one, and a very lucrative one beyond doubt.

He imparted it to me as freely as if I had been a part of himself. After doing so, he made me the handsomest sharing offer that ever was made to me–or I believe to any other captain in the Merchant Navy–finishing with:

"Ravender, you are well aware that the lawlessness of that coast and country at

present is as special as the circumstances in which it is placed. Crews of vessels outward bound desert as soon as they make the land; crews of vessels homeward bound ship at enormous wages, with the express intention of murdering the captain and seizing the gold freight; no man can trust another, and the devil seems let loose. Now," said he, "you are almost the only man on whose integrity, discretion, and energy—" etc., etc. For, I don't want to repeat what he said, though I was and am sensible of it.

Notwithstanding my being, as I have mentioned, quite

ready for a voyage, still I had some doubts of this voyage. Of course I knew, without being told, that there were peculiar difficulties and dangers in it, a long way over and above those which attend all voyages. It must not be supposed that I was afraid to face them; but, in my opinion a man has no manly motive or sustainment in his own breast for facing dangers, unless he has well considered what they are, and is quietly able to say to himself, "None of these perils can now take me by surprise; I shall know what to do for the best in any of them; all the rest lies

in the higher and greater hands to which I humbly commit myself." On this principle I have so attentively considered–regarding it as my duty–all the hazards I have ever been able to think of, in the ordinary way of storm, shipwreck, and fire at sea, that I hope I should be prepared to do in any of those cases whatever could be done, to save the lives intrusted to my charge.

As I was thoughtful, my good friend proposed that he should leave me to walk as long as I liked, and that I should dine with him by and by at his club in Pall Mall.

I accepted the invitation, and I walked up and down for a couple of hours.

All dinner-time, and all after dinner-time, we talked it over again. I gave him my views of his plan, and he very much approved of the same. I told him I had nearly decided, but not quite. "Well, well," said he, "come down to Liverpool tomorrow with me, and see the *Golden Mary*." I liked the name; so I began to feel that it was almost done when I said I would go to Liverpool. On the next morning but one we were on board the *Golden Mary*. I might have known, from his asking me to

come down to see her, what she was. I declare her to have been the completest and most exquisite beauty that ever I set my eyes upon.

We had inspected every timber in her, and were going ashore, when I put out my hand to my friend. "Touch upon it," said I, "and touch heartily. I take command of this ship and I am hers and yours, if I can get John Steadiman for my chief mate."

Chief Mate, John Steadiman

John Steadiman had sailed with me four voyages. The first voyage John was third

mate out to China, and came home second. The other three voyages he was my first officer. At this time of chartering the *Golden Mary* he was aged thirty-two. A brisk, bright, blue-eyed fellow, a very neat figure and rather under the middle size, never out of the way and never in it, a face that pleased everybody and that all children took to, a habit of going about singing as cheerily as a blackbird, and a perfect sailor.

We were in one of those Liverpool hackney-coaches in less than a minute, and we cruised about in her upwards of three hours, looking for

John. John had come home from Van Diemen's Land barely a month before, and I had heard of him as taking a frisk in Liverpool. We asked after him, among many other places, at the two boarding-houses he was fondest of, and we found he had had a week's spell at each of them; but, he had gone here and gone there, and where he might be then, or when he might come back nobody could tell us. But it was surprising, to be sure, to see how every face brightened the moment there was mention made of the name of Mr. Steadiman.

We were taken aback at

meeting with no better luck, when, as we were jogging through the streets, I clapped my eyes on John himself coming out of a toy-shop! He was carrying a little boy, and conducting two uncommon pretty women to their coach. He told me afterwards that he had never in his life seen one of the three before, but that he was so taken with them, while they were buying the child a Noah's ark, that he had gone in and asked the ladies' permission to treat him to a tolerably correct cutter there was in the window, in order that such a handsome boy might not grow up with a lubberly

idea of naval architecture.

We stood off and on until the ladies' coachman began to give way, and then we hailed John. I told him, very gravely, what I had said to my friend. It struck him, as he said himself, amid-ships. He was quite shaken by it. "Captain Ravender," were John Steadiman's words, "such an opinion from you is true commendation, and I'll sail around the world with you for twenty years if you hoist the signal, and stand by you forever!" And now indeed I felt that it was done, and that the *Golden Mary* was afloat.

The riggers were out of

the ship in a fortnight, and we had begun taking in cargo. John was always aboard, seeing everything stowed with his own eyes. And whenever I went aboard myself early or late, whether he was below in the hold, or on deck at the hatchway, or overhauling his cabin, of a certainty I heard John singing like a blackbird.

The Passengers

We had room for twenty passengers. Our sailing advertisement was no sooner out than we might have taken these twenty times over. In entering our men, I and John

picked them, and we chose none but good hands—as good as were to be found in that port. And so, in a good ship of the best build, well owned, well arranged, well officered, well manned, we parted with our pilot at a quarter past four o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh of March, 1851, and stood with a fair wind out to sea.

It may be easily believed that up to that time I had had no leisure to be intimate with my passengers. The most of them were then in their berths seasick; however, in going among them, telling them what was good for them, per-

suading them not to be there, but to come up on deck and feel the breeze, and in rousing them with a joke, or a comfortable word, I made acquaintance with them, perhaps, in a more friendly and confidential way from the first, than I might have done at the cabin table.

Of my passengers, I need only particularize, just at present, a bright-eyed blooming young wife who was going out to join her husband in California, taking with her their only child, a little girl three years old, whom he had never seen; a sedate young woman in black, some five

years older, who was going out to join a brother; and an old gentleman, a good deal like a hawk if his eyes had been better and not so red, who was always talking, morning, noon, and night, about the gold discovery. But, whether he was making the voyage, thinking his old arms could dig for gold, or whether his speculation was to buy it, or to cheat for it, or to snatch it anyhow from other people, was his secret. He kept his secret.

These three and the child were the soonest well. The child was a most engaging child, to be sure, and very

fond of me; though I am bound to admit that John Steadiman and I were borne on her pretty little books in reverse order, and that he was captain there, and I was mate. It was beautiful to watch her with John, and it was beautiful to watch John with her. Few would have thought it possible, to see John playing at bo-peep round the mast, that he was the man who had caught up an iron bar and struck a Malay and a Maltese dead, as they were gliding with their knives down the cabin stair aboard the bark *Old England*, when the captain lay ill in his cot, off Sauger Point. But

he was; and give him his back against a bulwark, he would have done the same by half a dozen of them. The name of the young mother was Mrs. Atherfield, the name of the young lady in black was Miss Coleshaw, and that of the old gentleman was Mr. Rarx.

As the child had a quantity of shining fair hair, clustering in curls all around her face, and as her name was Lucy, Steadiman gave her the name of Golden Lucy. So we had the Golden Lucy and the Golden Mary; and John kept up the idea to that extent, as he and the child went playing

about the decks, that I believe she used to think the ship was alive somehow—a sister or companion, going to the same place as she herself. She liked to be by the wheel, and in fine weather, I often stood by the man whose turn it was at the wheel, only to hear her, sitting near my feet, talking to the ship. Never had a child such a doll before, I suppose; but she made a doll of the *Golden Mary*, and used to dress her up by tying ribbons and little bits of finery to the belaying pins; and nobody ever moved them, unless it was to save them from being blown away.

I gave the two young women their places on each side of me at dinner, Mrs. Atherfield on my right and Miss Coleshaw on my left; and I directed the unmarried lady to serve out the breakfast, and the married lady to serve out tea. Likewise I said to my black steward in their presence, "Tom, these ladies are equally the mistresses of this house, and do you obey their orders equally"; at which Tom laughed, and they all laughed.

Old Mr. Rarx was not a pleasant man to look at, nor yet to talk to, nor to be with, for no one could help seeing

that he was a sordid and selfish character, and that he had warped further and further out of the straight with time. Not but that he was on his best behavior with us, as everybody was; for we had no bickering among us, for'ard or aft. I only mean to say, he was not the man one would have chosen for a messmate. If choice there had been, one might even have gone a few points out of one's course to say, "No! Not him!" But there was one curious inconsistency in Mr. Rarx. That was, that he took an astonishing interest in the child. He looked, and I may add, he was, one of the

last men to care at all for a child, or care much for any human creature. Still, he went so far as to be habitually uneasy if the child was long on deck out of his sight. He was always afraid of her falling overboard, or falling down a hatchway, or of a block or what not coming down upon her from the rigging in the working of the ship, or of her getting some hurt or other. He used to look at her and touch her, as if she was something precious to him. He was always solicitous about her not injuring her health, and constantly entreated her mother to be

careful of it. This was so much the more curious, because the child did not like him, but used to shrink away from him, and would not even put out her hand to him without coaxing from others. I believe that every soul on board frequently noticed this, and not one of us understood it.

The Voyage

Before I go any further with this narrative, I will state that our ship was a bark of three hundred tons, carrying a crew of eighteen men, a second mate in addition to

John, a carpenter, an armorer or smith, and two apprentices. We had three boats: the long-boat, capable of carrying twenty-five men; the cutter, capable of carrying fifteen; and the surf-boat, capable of carrying ten. I put down the capacity of these boats according to the numbers they were really meant to hold.

We had tastes of bad weather and head-winds, of course; but, on the whole, we had as fine a run as any reasonable man could expect, for sixty days. I then began to enter two remarks in the ship's log and in my journal; first, that there was an unusual

and amazing quantity of ice; second, that the nights were most wonderfully dark in spite of the ice.

For five days and a half it seemed quite useless and hopeless to alter the ship's course so as to stand out of the way of this ice. I made what southing I could; but, all that time, we were beset by it. Mrs. Atherfield, after standing by me on deck once, looking for some time in an awed manner at the great bergs that surrounded us, said in a whisper, "Oh! Captain Ravender, it looks as if the whole solid earth had changed into ice, and broken up!" I said to her,

laughing, "I don't wonder that it does, to your inexperienced eyes, my dear." But I had never seen a twentieth part of the quantity, and, in reality, I was pretty much of her opinion.

However, at two P. M. on the afternoon of the sixth day of the ice, that is to say, when we were sixty-six days out, John Steadiman, who had gone aloft, sang out from the top that the sea was clear ahead. Before four P. M. a strong breeze sprang up right astern, and we were in open water at sunset. The breeze then freshening into half a gale of wind, and the *Golden*

Mary being a very fast sailer, we went before the wind merrily all night.

I had thought it impossible that it could be darker than it had been, until the sun, moon, and stars should fall out of the heavens, and Time should be destroyed; but it had been next to light, in comparison with what it was now. The darkness was so profound that looking into it was painful and oppressive–like looking, without a ray of light, into a dense black bandage put as close before the eyes as it could be, without touching them. I doubled the lookout, and John and I stood in the

bow side-by-side, never leaving it all night. Yet I should no more have known that he was near me when he was silent, without putting out my arm and touching him, than I should if he had turned in and been fast asleep below. We were not so much looking out, all of us, as listening to the utmost, with both our eyes and ears.

Next day I found that the mercury in the barometer, which had risen steadily since we cleared the ice, remained steady. I had had very good observations, with now and then the interruption of a day or so, since our departure. I

got the sun at noon, and found that we were in Lat. 58° S., Long. 60° W., off New South Shetland, in the neighborhood of Cape Horn. We were sixty-seven days out, that day. The ship did her duty admirably, all on board were well, and all hands were as smart, efficient, and contented as it was possible to be.

When the night came on again as dark as before, it was the eighth night I had been on deck. Nor had I taken more than a very little sleep in the daytime, my station being always near the helm, and often at it, while

we were among the ice. Few but those who have tried it can imagine the difficulty and pain of only keeping the eyes open–physically open–under such circumstances, in such darkness. They get struck by the darkness, and blinded by the darkness. They make patterns in it, and they flash in it, as if they had gone out of your head to look at you. On the turn of midnight, John Steadiman, who was alert and fresh–for I had always made him turn in by day–said to me, "Captain Ravender, I entreat of you to go below. I am sure you can hardly stand, and your voice is getting

weak, sir. Go below, and take a little rest. I'll call you if a block chafes." I said to John in answer, "Well, well, John! Let us wait till the turn of one o'clock, before we talk about that." I had just had one of the ship's lanterns held up, that I might see how the night went by my watch, and it was then twenty minutes after twelve.

At five minutes before one, John sang out to the boy to bring the lantern again, and when I told him once more what the time was, entreated and prayed of me to go below. "Captain Ravender," said he, "all's well; we can't afford to

have you laid up for a single hour; and I respectfully and earnestly beg of you to go below." The end of it was that I agreed to do so, on the understanding that if I failed to come up of my own accord within three hours, I was to be punctually called. Having settled that, I left John in charge. But I called him to me once afterwards, to ask him a question. I had been to look at the barometer, and had seen the mercury still perfectly steady, and had come up the companion again to take a last look about me—if I can use such a word in reference to such darkness—when

I thought that the waves, as the *Golden Mary* parted them and shook them off, had a hollow sound in them; something that I fancied was a rather unusual reverberation. I was standing by the quarter-deck rail on the starboard side, when I called John aft to me, and bade him listen. He did so with the greatest attention. Turning to me he then said, "Rely upon it, Captain Ravender, you have been without rest too long, and the novelty is only in the state of your sense of hearing." I thought so, too, by that time, and I think so now, though I can never know for

absolute certain whether it was or not.

When I left John Steadiman in charge, the ship was still going at a great rate through the water. The wind still blew right astern. Though she was making great way, she was under shortened sail, and had no more than she could easily carry. All was snug, and nothing complained. There was a pretty sea running, but not a high sea, nor at all a confused one.

I turned in, as we seamen say, all standing. The meaning of that is, I did not pull my clothes off—no, not even so much as my coat; though I

did my shoes, for my feet were badly swelled with the deck. There was a little swing-lamp alight in my cabin. I thought, as I looked at it before shutting my eyes, that I was so tired of darkness and troubled by darkness, that I could have gone to sleep best in the midst of a million of flaming gas-lights. That was the last thought I had before I went off, except the prevailing thought that I should not be able to get to sleep at all.

CHAPTER II

ADRIFT UPON THE SEA

The Wreck

I dreamed that I was back at Penrith again, and was trying to get round the church, which had altered its shape very much since I last saw it, and was cloven all down the middle of the steeple in a most singular manner. Why I wanted to get round the church I don't know, but I was as anxious to do it as if my life depended

on it. Indeed, I believe it did in the dream. For all that, I could not get round the church. I was still trying, when I came against it with a violent shock, and was flung out of my cot against the ship's side. Shrieks and a terrific outcry struck me far harder than the bruising timbers, and amidst sounds of grinding and crashing, and a heavy rushing and breaking of water–sounds I understood too well–I made my way on deck. It was not an easy thing to do, for the ship heeled over frightfully, and was beating in a furious manner.

I could not see the men as I went forward, but I could hear that they were hauling in sail, in disorder. I had my trumpet in my hand, and, after directing and encouraging them in this till it was done, I hailed first John Steadiman, and then my second mate, Mr. William Rames. Both answered clearly and steadily. Now, I had practiced them and all my crew, as I have ever made it a custom to practice all who sail with me, to take certain stations and wait my orders, in case of any unexpected crisis. When my voice was heard hailing, and their voices were heard

answering, I was aware, through all the noises of the ship and sea, and all the crying of the passengers below, that there was a pause. "Are you ready, Rames?"– "Aye, aye, sir!"–"Then light up, for God's sake!" In a moment he and another were burning blue-lights, and the ship and all on board seemed to be inclosed in a mist of light, under a great black dome.

The light shone up so high that I could see the huge iceberg upon which we had struck, cloven at the top and down the middle, exactly like Penrith Church in my dream.

At the same moment I could see the watch last relieved crowding up and down on deck; I could see Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw thrown about on the top of the companion as they struggled to bring the child up from below; I could see that the masts were going with the shock and the beating of the ship; I could see the frightful breach stove in on the starboard side, half the length of the vessel, and the sheathing and timbers spirting up; I could see that the cutter was disabled, in a wreck of broken fragments; and I could see every eye turned

upon me. It is my belief that if there had been ten thousand eyes there, I should have seen them all, with their different looks. And all this in a moment. But you must consider what a moment.

I saw the men, as they looked at me, fall toward their appointed stations, like good men and true. If the ship had not righted, they could have done very little there or anywhere but die—not that it is little for a man to die at his post—I mean they could have done nothing to save the passengers and themselves. Happily, however, the violence of the shock with which we

had so determinedly borne down direct on that fatal iceberg, as if it had been our destination instead of our destruction, had so smashed and pounded the ship that she got off in this same instant and righted. I did not need the carpenter to tell me she was filling and going down; I could see and hear that. I gave Rames the word to lower the long-boat and the surf-boat, and I myself told off the men for each duty. Not one hung back, or came before the other. I now whispered to John Steadiman, "John, I stand at the gang-way here, to see every soul

on board safe over the side. You shall have the next post of honor, and shall be the last but one to leave the ship. Bring up the passengers and range them behind me; and put what provision and water you can get at in the boats. Cast your eye for'ard, John, and you'll see you have not a moment to lose."

My noble fellows got the boats over the side as orderly as I ever saw boats lowered with any sea running, and when they were launched, two or three of the nearest men in them as they held on, rising and falling with the swell, called out, looking

up at me, "Captain Ravender, if anything goes wrong with us, and you are saved, remember, we stood by you!"–"We'll all stand by one another ashore, yet, please God, my lads!" said I. "Hold on bravely, and be tender with the women."

The women were an example to us. They trembled very much, but they were quiet and perfectly collected. "Kiss me, Captain Ravender," says Mrs. Atherfield, "and God in heaven bless you, you good man!" "My dear," said I, "those words are better for me than a lifeboat." I held her child in my arms till she

was in the boat, and then kissed the child and handed her safe down. I now said to the people in the boat, "You have got your freight, my lads, all but me, and I am not coming yet awhile. Pull away from the ship, and keep off!"

That was the long-boat. Old Mr. Rarx was one of her passengers, and he was the only one who had greatly misbehaved since the ship struck. Others had been a little wild, which was not to be wondered at, and not very blamable; but he had made a lamentation and uproar which it was dangerous

for the people to hear, as there is always contagion in weakness and selfishness. His incessant cry had been that he must not be separated from the child, that he couldn't see the child, and that he and the child must go together. He had even tried to wrest her out of my arms, that he might keep her in his. "Mr. Rarx," said I to him when it came to that, "I have a loaded pistol in my pocket; and if you don't stand out of the gangway and keep perfectly quiet, I shall shoot you through the heart, if you have got one." Said he, "You won't do murder, Captain

Ravender!" "No, sir," said I. "I won't murder forty-four people to humor you, but I'll shoot you to save them." After that he was quiet, and stood shivering a little way off, until I named him to go over the side.

The long-boat being cast off, the surf-boat was soon filled. There only remained aboard the *Golden Mary*, John Mullion, the man who had kept on burning the blue-lights, and who had lighted every new one at every old one before it went out, as quietly as if he had been at an illumination; John Steadiman; and myself. I hurried

those two into the surf-boat, called to them to keep off, and waited with a grateful and relieved heart for the long-boat to come and take me in, if she could. I looked at my watch, and it showed me, by the blue-light, ten minutes past two. They lost no time. As soon as she was near enough, I swung myself into her, and called to the men, "With a will, lads! She's reeling!" We were not an inch too far out of the inner vortex of her going down, when, by the blue-light which John Mullion still burned in the bow of the surf-boat, we saw her lurch, and plunge

to the bottom head-foremost. The child cried, weeping wildly, "Oh, the dear Golden Mary! Oh, look at her! Save her! Save the poor Golden Mary!" And then the light burned out, and the black dome seemed to come down upon us.

Adrift in the Lifeboats

I suppose if we had all stood atop of a mountain, and seen the whole remainder of the world sink away from under us, we could hardly have felt more shocked and solitary than we did when we knew we were alone on

the wide ocean, and that the beautiful ship in which most of us had been securely asleep within half an hour was gone forever. There was an awful silence in our boat, and such a kind of palsy on the rowers and the man at the rudder, that I felt they were scarcely keeping her before the sea. I spoke out then, and said, "Let everyone here thank the Lord for our preservation!" All the voices answered, even the child's, "We thank the Lord!" I then said the Lord's Prayer, and all hands said it after me with a solemn murmuring. Then I gave the word "Cheerily, O men,

cheerily!" and I felt that they were handling the boat again as a boat ought to be handled.

The surf-boat now burned another blue-light to show us where they were, and we made for her, and laid ourselves as nearly alongside of her as we dared. I had always kept my boats with a coil or two of good stout stuff in each of them; so both boats had a rope at hand. We made a shift, with much labor and trouble, to get near enough to one another to divide the blue-lights—they were no use after that night, for the sea-water soon got at them—and to get a tow-rope

out between us. All night long we kept together, sometimes obliged to cast off the rope, and sometimes getting it out again, and all of us wearying for the morning—which appeared so long in coming that old Mr. Rarx screamed out, in spite of his fears of me, "The world is drawing to an end, and the sun will never rise any more!"

When the day broke, I found that we were all huddled together in a miserable manner. We were deep in the water; being, as I found on mustering, thirty-one in number, or at least six too many. In the surf-boat they were

fourteen in number, being at least four too many. The first thing I did was to get myself passed to the rudder—which I took from that time—and to get Mrs. Atherfield, her child, and Miss Coleshaw, passed on to sit next to me. As to old Mr. Rarx, I put him in the bow, as far from us as I could. And I put some of the best men near us in order that if I should drop, there might be a skillful hand ready to take the helm.

The sea moderating as the sun came up, though the sky was cloudy and wild, we spoke the other boat, to know what stores they had, and to

overhaul what we had. I had a compass in my pocket, a small telescope, a double-barreled pistol, a knife, and a fire-box and matches. Most of my men had knives, and some had a little tobacco; some, a pipe as well. We had a mug among us, and an iron spoon. As to provisions, there were in my boat two bags of biscuit, one piece of raw beef, one piece of raw pork, a bag of coffee, roasted but not ground–thrown in, I imagine, by mistake for something else–two small casks of water, and about half a gallon of rum in a keg. The surf-boat, having rather more rum

than we, and fewer to drink it, gave us, as I estimated, another quart into our keg. In return, we gave them three double handfuls of coffee, tied up in a piece of a handkerchief; they reported that they had aboard, besides, a bag of biscuit, a piece of beef, a small cask of water, a small box of lemons, and a Dutch cheese. It took a long time to make these exchanges, and they were not made without risk to both parties; the sea running quite high enough to make our approaching near to one another very hazardous. In the bundle with the coffee, I conveyed to John Steadiman,

who had a ship's compass with him, a paper written in pencil, and torn from my pocket-book, containing the course I meant to steer, in the hope of making land, or being picked up by some vessel–I say in the hope, though I had little hope of either deliverance. I then sang out to him, so as all might hear, that if we two boats could live or die together, we would; but that if we should be parted by the weather, and join company no more, they should have our prayers and blessings, and we asked for theirs. We then gave them three cheers, which they re-

turned, and I saw the men's heads droop in both boats as they fell to their oars again.

These arrangements had occupied the general attention advantageously for all, though, as I expressed in the last sentence, they ended in a sorrowful feeling. I now said a few words to my fellow-voyagers on the subject of the small stock of food on which our lives depended if they were preserved from the great deep, and on the rigid necessity of our eking it out in the most frugal manner. One and all replied that whatever allowance I thought best to lay down should be strictly

kept to. We made a pair of scales out of a thin scrap of iron-plating and some twine, and I got together for weights such of the heaviest buttons among us as I calculated made up some fraction over two ounces. This was the allowance of solid food served out once a day to each, from that time to the end; with the addition of a coffee-berry, or sometimes a half a one, when the weather was very fair, for breakfast. We had nothing else whatever, but half a pint of water each per day, and sometimes, when we were coldest and weakest, a teaspoonful of rum each. Of the

water, sometimes we had less, and sometimes more; for much rain fell, and we caught it in a canvas stretched for the purpose.

Thus, at that tempestuous time of the year, and in the tempestuous part of the world, we shipwrecked people rose and fell with the waves. It is not my intention to relate, if I can avoid it, such circumstances appertaining to our doleful condition as have been better told in many other narratives of the kind than I can be expected to tell them. I will only note, in so many passing words, that day after day and night after night, we

received the sea upon our backs to prevent it from swamping the boat; that one party was always kept bailing, and that every hat and cap among us soon got worn out, though patched up fifty times, as the only vessels we had for that service; that another party lay down in the bottom of the boat, while a third rowed; and that we were soon all in boils and blisters and rags.

The other boat was a source of such anxious interest to all of us that I used to wonder whether, if we were saved, the time could ever come when the survivors in

this boat of ours could be at all indifferent to the fortunes of the survivors in that. We got out a tow-rope whenever the weather permitted, but that did not often happen, and how we two parties kept within the same horizon, as we did, He, who mercifully permitted it to be so for our consolation, only knows. I never shall forget the looks with which, when the morning light came, we used to gaze about us over the stormy waters for the other boat. We once parted company for seventy-two hours, and we believed them to have gone down, as they did us. The

joy on both sides when we came within view of one another again, had something in a manner divine in it; each was so forgetful of individual suffering, in tears of sympathy for the people in the other boat.

I have been wanting to get round to the individual or personal part of my subject, as I call it, and the foregoing incident puts me in the right way. The patience and good disposition aboard of us was wonderful. I was not surprised by it in the women; for all men born of women know what great qualities they will show when men

fail; but I own I was a little surprised by it in some of the men. Among one-and-thirty people assembled at the best of times, there will usually, I should say, be two or three uncertain tempers. I knew that I had more than one rough temper with me among my own people, for I had chosen those for the long-boat that I might have them under my eye. But they softened under their misery, and were as considerate of the ladies, and as compassionate of the child, as the best among us, or among any men—they could not have been more so. I heard scarcely any

complaining. The party lying down would moan a good deal in their sleep, and I would often notice a man—not always the same man, it is to be understood, but nearly all of them at one time or other—sitting moaning at his oar, or in his place, as he looked mistily over the sea. When it happened to be long before I could catch his eye, he would go on moaning all the time in the dismalest manner; but when our looks met, he would brighten and leave off. I almost always got the impression that he did not know what sound he had been making, but that he thought he

had been humming a tune.

Our sufferings from cold and wet were far greater than our sufferings from hunger. We managed to keep the child warm; but I doubt if anyone else among us ever was warm for five minutes together; and the shivering and the chattering of teeth, were sad to hear. The child cried a little at first for her lost playfellow, the *Golden Mary*; but hardly ever whimpered afterwards; and when the state of the weather made it possible, she used now and then to be held up in the arms of some of us, to look over the sea for John Steadiman's boat. I see the

golden hair and the innocent face now, between me and the driving clouds, like an angel going to fly away.

It happened on the second day, toward night, that Mrs. Atherfield, in getting little Lucy to sleep, sang her a song. She had a soft, melodious voice, and when she had finished it, our people up and begged for another. She sang them another, and after it had fallen dark ended with the Evening Hymn. From that time, whenever anything could be heard above the sea and wind, and while she had any voice left, nothing would serve the people but that she should

sing at sunset. She always did, and always ended with the Evening Hymn. We mostly took up the last line, and shed tears when it was done, but not miserably. We had a prayer night and morning, also, when the weather allowed of it.

Twelve nights and eleven days we had been driving in the boat, when old Mr. Rarx began to be delirious, and to cry out to me to throw the gold overboard or it would sink us, and we should all be lost. For days past the child had been declining, and that was the great cause of his wildness. He had been over

and over again shrieking out to me to give her all the remaining meat, to save her at any cost, or we should all be ruined. At this time she lay in her mother's arms at my feet. One of her little hands was almost always creeping about her mother's neck or chin. I had watched the wasting of the little hand, and I knew it was nearly over.

The old man's cries were so discordant with the mother's love and submission that I called out to him in an angry voice, unless he held his peace on the instant, I would order him to be thrown

overboard. He was mute then, until the child died, very peacefully, an hour afterwards; which was known to all in the boat by the mother's breaking out into lamentations for the first time since the wreck–for she had great fortitude and constancy, though she was a little, gentle woman. Old Mr. Rarx then became quite ungovernable, tearing what rags he had on him, raging in imprecations, and calling to me that if I had thrown the gold overboard–always the gold with him–I might have saved the child. "And now," said he, in a terrible voice, "we shall founder, and all go

to the Devil, for our sins will sink us when we have no innocent child to bear us up!" We soon discovered with amazement that this old wretch had only cared for the life of the pretty little creature dear to all of us, because of the influence he superstitiously hoped she might have in preserving him! Altogether it was too much for the smith, or armorer, who was sitting next the old man, to bear. He took him by the throat and rolled him under the seats, where he lay still enough for hours afterwards.

All that thirteenth night, Miss Coleshaw, lying across

my knees as I kept the helm, comforted and supported the poor mother. Her child, covered with a pea-jacket of mine, lay in her lap. It troubled me all night to think that there was no prayer-book among us, and that I could remember but very few of the exact words of the burial service. When I stood up at broad day, all knew what was going to be done, and I noticed that my poor fellows made the motion of uncovering their heads, though their heads had been stark bare to the sky and sea for many a weary hour. There was a long heavy swell on, but otherwise

it was a fair morning, and there were broad fields of sunlight on the waves in the east. I said no more than this: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He raised the daughter of Jairus the ruler, and said she was not dead but slept. He raised the widow's son. He arose Himself, and was seen of many. He loved little children, saying, 'Suffer them to come unto Me and rebuke them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' In His name, my friends, and committed to His merciful goodness!" With those words I laid my rough face softly on

the placid little forehead, and buried the Golden Lucy in the grave of the *Golden Mary.*

Having had it on my mind to relate the end of this dear little child, I have omitted something from its exact place, which I will supply here. It will come quite as well here as anywhere else.

Foreseeing that if the boat lived through the stormy weather, the time must come, and soon come, when we should have absolutely no morsel to eat, I had one momentous point often in my thoughts. Although I had, years before, fully satisfied myself that the instances in

which human beings in the last distress have fed upon each other are exceedingly few, I felt doubtful whether there might not be some harm and danger from keeping the topic out of sight and pretending not to think of it. I felt doubtful whether some minds, growing weak with fasting and exposure and having such a terrific idea to dwell upon in secret, might not magnify it until it got to have an awful attraction about it. This was not a new thought of mine, for it had grown out of my reading. So on the fourth day I decided that I would bring out into

the light that unformed fear which must have been more or less darkly in every brain among us. Therefore, as a means of beguiling the time and inspiring hope, I gave them the best summary in my power of Bligh's voyage of more than three thousand miles, in an open boat, after the mutiny of the *Bounty*, and of the wonderful preservation of that boat's crew. They listened throughout with great interest, and I concluded by telling them that, in my opinion, the happiest circumstance in the whole narrative was that Bligh, who was no delicate man, either, had solemnly

placed it on record therein that he was sure and certain that under no conceivable circumstances whatever would that emaciated party, who had gone through all the pains of famine, have preyed on one another. I cannot describe the visible relief which this spread through the boat, and how the tears stood in every eye. From that time I was as well convinced as Bligh himself that there was no danger, and that this phantom, at any rate, did not haunt us.

Now, it was a part of Bligh's experience that when the people in his boat were most cast down, nothing did

them so much good as hearing a story told by one of their number. When I mentioned that, I saw that it struck the general attention as much as it did my own. This was on the day after Mrs. Atherfield first sang to us. I proposed that, whenever the weather would permit, we should have a story two hours after dinner–I always issued the allowance I have mentioned at one o'clock, and called it by that name–as well as our song at sunset. The proposal was received with a cheerful satisfaction that warmed my heart within me; and I do not say too much when I say that

those two periods in the four-and-twenty hours were expected with positive pleasure, and were really enjoyed by all hands. Specters as we soon were, in our bodily wasting, our imagination did not perish like the gross flesh upon our bones. Music and adventure, two of the great gifts of Providence to mankind, could charm us long after that was lost.

The wind was almost always against us after the second day; and for many days together we could not nearly hold our own. We had all varieties of bad weather. We had rain, hail, snow, wind,

mist, thunder, and lightning. Still the boats lived through the heavy seas, and still we perishing people rose and fell with the great waves.

Sixteen nights and fifteen days, twenty nights and nineteen days, twenty-four nights and twenty-three days. So the time went on. Disheartening as I knew that our progress, or want of progress, must be, I never deceived them as to my calculations of it. In the first place, I felt that we were all too near eternity for deceit; in the second place, I knew that if I failed, or died, the man who followed me must have a knowledge of

the true state of things to begin upon. When I told them, at noon, what I reckoned we had made or lost, they generally received what I said in a tranquil and resigned manner, and always gratefully toward me.

During the whole of this time, old Mr. Rarx had had his fits of calling out to me to throw the gold (always the gold!) overboard, and of heaping violent reproaches upon me for not having saved the child; but now, the food being all gone, and I having nothing left to serve out but a bit of coffee-berry now and then, he began to be too weak to

do this, and consequently fell silent. Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw generally lay, each with an arm across one of my knees and her head upon it. They never complained at all. Up to the time of her child's death, Mrs. Atherfield had bound up her own beautiful hair every day; and I took particular notice that this was always before she sang her song at night, when everyone looked at her. But she never did it after the loss of her darling; and it would have been now all tangled with dirt and wet, but that Miss Coleshaw cared for it, and would sometimes smooth

it down with her weak thin hands.

We were past mustering a story now; but one day, about this period, I reverted to the superstition of old Mr. Rarx, concerning the Golden Lucy, and told them that nothing vanished from the eye of God, though much might pass away from the eyes of men. "We were all of us," said I, "children once; and our baby feet have strolled in green woods ashore; and our baby hands have gathered flowers in gardens, where the birds were singing. The children that we were, are not lost to the great knowledge of our Creator.

Those innocent creatures will appear with us before Him and plead for us. What we were in the best time of our generous youth will arise and go with us too. The purest part of our lives will not desert us at the pass to which all of us here present are gliding. What we were then, will be as much in existence before Him, as what we are now." They were no less comforted by this consideration than I was myself; and Miss Coleshaw, drawing my ear nearer to her lips, said, "Captain Ravender, I was on my way to marry a disgraced and broken man, whom I

dearly loved when he was honorable and good. Your words seem to have come out of my own poor heart." She pressed my hand upon it, smiling.

Twenty-seven nights and twenty-six days. We were in no want of rain-water, but we had nothing else. And yet, even now, I never turned my eyes on a waking face but it tried to brighten before mine. Oh, what a thing it is, in a time of danger and in the presence of death, the shining of a face upon a face! I have heard it broached that orders should be given in great new ships by electric telegraph. I admire machinery as much

as any man, and am as thankful to it as any man can be for what it does for us. But it will never be a substitute for the face of a man, with his soul in it, encouraging another man to be brave and true. Never try it for that. It will break down like a straw.

I now began to remark certain changes in myself which I did not like. They caused me much disquiet. I often saw the Golden Lucy in the air above the boat. I often saw her I have spoken of before, sitting beside me. I saw the *Golden Mary* go down, as she really had gone

down, twenty times in a day. And yet the sea was mostly, to my thinking, not sea neither, but moving country and extraordinary mountainous regions, the like of which have never been beheld. I felt it time to leave my last words regarding John Steadiman, in case any lips should last to repeat them to any living ears. I said John had told me that he had sung out "Breakers ahead!" the instant they were audible, and had tried to wear ship, but she struck before it could be done. His cry, I dare say, had made my dream. I said that the circumstances were altogether

without warning, and out of any course that could have been guarded against; that the same loss would have happened if I had been in charge; and that John was not to blame, but from first to last had done his duty nobly, like the man he was. I tried to write it down in my pocket-book, but could make no words, though I knew what the words were that I wanted to make. When it had come to that, her hands—though she was dead so long—laid me down gently in the bottom of the boat, and she and the Golden Lucy swung me to sleep.

The Long-Boat's Signal

All that follows was written by John Steadiman, Chief Mate:

On the twenty-sixth day after the foundering of the *Golden Mary* at sea, I, John Steadiman, was sitting in my place in the stern-sheets of the surf-boat, with just sense enough left in me to steer—that is to say, with my eyes strained, wide-awake, over the bows of the boat, and my brains fast asleep and dreaming—when I was roused upon a sudden by our second mate, Mr. William Rames.

"Let me take a spell in

your place," said he. "And look you out for the long-boat astern. The last time she rose on the crest of a wave, I thought I made out a signal flying aboard her."

We shifted our places, clumsily and slowly enough, for we were both of us weak and dazed with wet, cold, and hunger. I waited some time, watching the heavy rollers astern, before the long-boat rose atop of one of them at the same time with us. At last she was heaved up for a moment well in view, and there, sure enough, was the signal flying aboard of her—a strip of rag of some sort,

rigged to an oar, and hoisted in her bows.

"What does it mean?" says Rames to me in a quavering, trembling sort of voice. "Do they signal a sail in sight?"

"Hush, for God's sake!" said I, clapping my hand over his mouth. "Don't let the people hear you. They'll all go mad together if we mislead them about that signal. Wait a bit, till I have another look at it."

I held on by him, for he had set me all a tremble with his notion of a sail in sight, and watched for the long-boat again. Up she rose on the top of another roller. I made

out the signal clearly, that second time, and saw that it was rigged half-mast.

"Rames," said I, "it's a signal of distress. Pass the word forward to keep her before the sea, and no more. We must get the long-boat within hailing distance as soon as possible."

I dropped down into my old place at the tiller without another word–for the thought went through me like a knife that something had happened to Captain Ravender. I should consider myself unworthy to write another line of this statement, if I had not made up my mind to speak the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—and I must, therefore, confess plainly that now, for the first time, my heart sank within me. This weakness on my part was produced in some degree by the exhausting effects of previous anxiety and grief.

Our provisions—if I may give that name to what we had left—were reduced to the rind of one lemon and about a couple of handfuls of coffee-berries. Besides these great distresses, caused by the death, the danger, and the suffering among my crew and passengers, I had had a little distress of my own to shake me still

more, in the death of the child whom I had got to be very fond of on the voyage out—so fond that I was secretly a little jealous of her being taken in the long-boat instead of mine when the ship foundered. It used to be a great comfort to me, and I think to those with me also, after we had seen the last of the *Golden Mary*, to see the Golden Lucy, held up by the men in the long-boat, when the weather allowed it, as the best and brightest sight they had to show. She looked, at the distance we saw her from, almost like a little white bird in the air. To miss her for

the first time, when the weather lulled a little again, and we all looked out for our white bird and looked in vain, was a sore disappointment. To see the men's heads bowed down and the captain's hand pointing into the sea when he hailed the long-boat, a few days after, gave me as heavy a shock and as sharp a pang of heartache to bear as ever I remember suffering in all my life. I only mention these things to show that if I did give way a little at first, under the dread that our captain was lost to us, it was not without having been a good deal shaken beforehand

by more trials of one sort or another than often fall to one man's share.

I had got over the choking in my throat with the help of a drop of water, and had steadied my mind again so as to be prepared against the worst, when I heard the hail—Lord help the poor fellows, how weak it sounded!

"Surf-boat, ahoy!"

I looked up, and there were our companions in misfortune tossing abreast of us; not so near that we could make out the features of any of them, but near enough, with some exertion for people in our condition, to make

their voices heard in the intervals when the wind was weakest.

I answered the hail, and waited a bit, and heard nothing, and then sang out the captain's name. The voice that replied did not sound like his; the words that reached us were:

"Chief mate wanted on board!"

Every man of my crew knew what that meant as well as I did. As second officer in command, there could be but one reason for wanting me on board the long-boat. A groan went all round us, and my men looked

darkly in each other's faces, and whispered, "The captain is dead!"

I commanded them to be silent, and not to make too sure of bad news, at such a pass as things had now come to with us. Then, hailing the long-boat, I signified that I was ready to go on board when the weather would let me—stopped a bit to draw a good long breath—and then called out as loud as I could the dreadful question:

"Is the captain dead?"

The black figures of three or four men in the after-part of the long-boat all stooped down together as my voice

reached them. They were lost to view for about a minute; then appeared again–one man among them was held up on his feet by the rest, and he hailed back the blessed words (a very faint hope went a very long way with people in our desperate situation): "Not yet!"

The Chief Mate in Command

The relief felt by me, and by all with me, when we knew that our captain, though unfitted for duty, was not lost to us, it is not in words–at least, not in such words as a man like me can command–

to express. I did my best to cheer the men by telling them what a good sign it was that we were not as badly off yet as we had feared, and then communicated what instructions I had to give, to William Rames, who was to be left in command in my place when I took charge of the long-boat. After that, there was nothing to be done but to wait for the chance of the wind dropping at sunset, and the sea going down afterwards, so as to enable our weak crews to lay the two boats alongside of each other, without undue risk—or, to put it plainer, without saddling

ourselves with the necessity for any extraordinary exertion of strength or skill. Both the one and the other had now been starved out of us for days and days together.

At sunset the wind suddenly dropped, but the sea, which had been running high for so long a time past, took hours after that before it showed any signs of getting to rest. The moon was shining, the sky was wonderfully clear, and it could not have been, according to my calculations, far off midnight, when the long, slow, regular swell of the calming ocean fairly set in, and I took the

responsibility of lessening the distance between the long-boat and ourselves.

It was, I dare say, a delusion of mine; but I thought I had never seen the moon shine so white and ghastly anywhere, either at sea or on land, as she shone that night while we were approaching our companions in misery. When there was not much more than a boat's length between us, and the white light streamed cold and clear over all our faces, both crews rested on their oars with one great shudder, and stared over the gunwhale of either boat, panic-stricken at the first sight

of each other.

"Any lives lost among you?" I asked, in the midst of that frightful silence. The men in the long-boat huddled together like sheep at the sound of my voice.

"None yet, but the child, thanks be to God!" answered one among them.

And at the sound of his voice, all my men shrank together like the men in the long-boat. I was afraid to let the horror produced by our first meeting at close quarters after the dreadful changes that wet, cold, and famine had produced, last one moment longer than could be helped;

so, without giving time for any more questions and answers, I commanded the men to lay the two boats close alongside of each other. When I rose up and committed the tiller to the hands of Rames, all my poor fellows raised their white faces imploringly to mine. "Don't leave us, sir," they said, "don't leave us." "I leave you," said I, "under the command and the guidance of Mr. William Rames, as good a sailor as I am, and as trusty and kind a man as ever stepped. Do your duty by him, as you have done it by me; and remember to the last, that

while there is life there is hope. God bless and help you all!" With those words I collected what strength I had left, and caught at two arms that were held out to me, and so got from the stern-sheets of one boat into the stern-sheets of the other.

"Mind where you step, sir," whispered one of the men who had helped me into the long-boat. I looked down as he spoke. Three figures were huddled up below me, with the moonshine falling on them in ragged streaks through the gaps between the men standing or sitting above them. The first face I made

out was the face of Miss Coleshaw; her eyes were wide open and fixed on me. She seemed still to keep her senses, and, by the alternate parting and closing of her lips, to be trying to speak, but I could not hear that she uttered a single word. On her shoulder rested the head of Mrs. Atherfield. The mother of our poor little Golden Lucy must, I think, have been dreaming of the child she had lost; for there was a faint smile just ruffling the white stillness of her face, when I first saw it turned upward, with peaceful closed eyes toward the heavens.

From her, I looked down a little, and there, with his head on her lap, and with one of her hands resting tenderly on his cheek–there lay the captain, to whose help and guidance, up to this miserable time, we had never looked in vain–there, worn out at last in our service, and for our sakes, lay the best and bravest man of all our company. I stole my hand in gently through his clothes and laid it on his heart, and felt a little feeble warmth over it, though my cold dulled touch could not detect even the faintest beating. The two men in the stern-sheets with me,

noticing what I was doing—knowing I loved him like a brother—and seeing, I suppose, more distress in my face than I myself was conscious of its showing, lost command over themselves altogether, and burst into a piteous moaning, sobbing lamentation over him. One of the two drew aside a jacket from his feet, and showed me that they were bare, except where a wet, ragged strip of stocking still clung to one of them. When the ship struck the iceberg, he had run on deck leaving his shoes in his cabin. All through the voyage in the boat his feet had been unpro-

tected; and not a soul had discovered it until he dropped! As long as he could keep his eyes open, the very look of them had cheered the men, and comforted and upheld the women. Not one living creature in the boat, with any sense about him, but had felt the good influence of that brave man in one way or another. Not one but had heard him, over and over again, give the credit to others which was due only to himself; praising this man for patience, and thanking that man for help, when the patience and the help had really and truly come only

from him.

All this, and much more, I heard pouring confusedly from the men's lips while they crouched down, sobbing and crying over their commander, and wrapping the jacket as warmly and tenderly as they could over his cold feet. It went to my heart to check them; but I knew that if this lamenting spirit spread any further, all chance of keeping alight any last sparks of hope and resolution among the boat's company would be lost forever. Accordingly I sent them to their places, spoke a few encouraging words to the men forward,

promising to serve out, when the morning came, as much as I dared, of any eatable thing left in the lockers; called to Rames, in my old boat, to keep as near us as he safely could; drew the garments and coverings of the two poor suffering women more closely about them; and, with a secret prayer to be directed for the best in bearing the awful responsibility now laid on my shoulders, took my captain's vacant place at the helm of the long-boat.

This, as well as I can tell it, is the full and true account of how I came to be placed in charge of the lost passen-

gers and crew of the *Golden Mary*, on the morning of the twenty-seventh day after the ship struck the iceberg, and foundered at sea.

CHAPTER III

THE RESCUE

The End of the Food Supply

When the sun rose on the twenty-seventh day of our calamity, the first question that I secretly asked myself was, "How many more mornings will the stoutest of us live to see?" I had kept count, ever since we took to the boats, of the days of the week; and I knew that we had now arrived at another Thursday. Judging by my own

sensations, and I believe I had as much strength left as the best man among us, I came to the conclusion that, unless the mercy of Providence interposed to deliver us, not one of our company could hope to see another morning after the morning of Sunday.

Two discoveries that I made—after redeeming my promise overnight, to serve out with the morning whatever eatable thing I could find—helped to confirm me in my gloomy view of our future prospects. In the first place, when the few coffee-berries left, together with a small allowance of water, had been

shared all around, I found on examining the lockers that not one grain of provision remained, fore or aft, in any part of the boat, and that our stock of fresh water was reduced to not much more than would fill a wine-bottle. In the second place, after the berries had been shared, and the water equally divided, I noticed that the sustenance thus administered produced no effect whatever, even of the most momentary kind, in raising the spirits of the passengers, except in one case, or in rallying the strength of the crew. The exception was Mr. Rarx. This tough and

greedy old sinner seemed to wake up from the trance he had lain in so long, when the smell of the berries and water was under his nose. He swallowed his share with a gulp that many a younger and better man in the boat might have envied; and went maundering on to himself afterwards, as if he had got a new lease of life. He fancied now that he was digging a gold-mine, all by himself, and going down bodily straight through the earth at the rate of thirty or forty miles an hour. "Leave me alone," said he, "leave me alone. The lower I go, the richer I get.

Down I go!—down, down, down, down, down, till I burst out at the other end of the world in a shower of gold!" So he went on, kicking feebly with his heels from time to time against the bottom of the boat.

But, as for all the rest, it was a pitiful and dreadful sight to see of how little use their last shadow of a meal was to them. I myself attended, before anybody else was served, to the two poor women. Miss Coleshaw shook her head faintly, and pointed to her throat, when I offered her the few berries that fell to her share. I made a shift

to crush them up fine and mix them with a little water, and got her to swallow that miserable drop of drink with the greatest difficulty. When it was down, there came no change for the better over her face. Nor did she recover, for so much as a moment, the capacity to speak, even in a whisper.

I next tried Mrs. Atherfield. It was hard to wake her out of the half-swooning, half-sleeping condition in which she lay—and harder still to get her to open her lips when I put the tin-cup to them. When I had at last prevailed on her to swallow her allow-

ance, she shut her eyes again and fell back into her old position. I saw her lips moving; and, putting my ear close to them, caught some of the words she was murmuring to herself. She was still dreaming of the Golden Lucy. She and the child were walking somewhere by the banks of a lake, at the time the buttercups are out. The Golden Lucy was gathering the buttercups, and making herself a watch-chain out of them, in imitation of the chain that her mother wore. They were carrying a little basket with them, and were going to dine together in a great hollow

tree growing on the banks of the lake. To get this pretty picture painted on one's mind as I got it, while listening to the poor mother's broken words, and then to look up at the haggard faces of the men in the boat, and at the wild ocean rolling all round us, was such a change from fancy to reality as it has fallen, I hope, to few men's lots to experience.

My next thought, when I had done my best for the women, was for the captain. I was free to risk losing my own share of water, if I pleased; so I tried, before tasting it myself, to get a

little between his lips; but his teeth were fast clenched, and I had neither strength nor skill to open them. The faint warmth still remained, thank God, over his heart–but, in all other respects he lay beneath us like a dead man. In covering him up again as comfortably as I could, I found a bit of paper crunched in one of his hands, and took it out. There was some writing on it, but not a word was readable. I suppose, poor fellow, that he had been trying to write some last instructions for me, just before he dropped at his post. If they had been ever so easy to read, they

would have been of no use now. To follow instructions we must have had some power to shape the boat's course in a given direction– and this, which we had been gradually losing for some days past, we had now lost altogether.

I had hoped that the serving out of the refreshment would have put a little strength into the arms of the men at the oars; but, as I have hinted, this hope turned out to be perfectly fruitless. Our last mockery of a meal, which had done nothing for the passengers, did nothing either for the crew–except to

aggravate the pangs of hunger in the men who were still strong enough to feel them. While the weather held moderate, it was not of much consequence if one or two of the rowers kept dropping, in turn, into a kind of faint sleep over their oars. But if it came on to blow again (and we could expect nothing else in those seas and at that time of the year) how was I to steer, when the blades of the oars were out of the water ten times as often as they were in? The lives which we had undergone such suffering to preserve would have been lost in an instant by the

swamping of the boat, if the wind had arisen on the morning of Thursday, and had caught us trying to row any longer.

Feeling this, I resolved, while the weather held moderately fine, to hoist the best substitute for a sail that we could produce, and to drive before the wind, on the chance—the last we had hope for—of a ship's picking us up. We had only continued to use the oars up to this time in order to keep the course which the captain had pointed out as the likeliest to bring us near the land. Sailing had been out of the question from

the first, the masts and suits of sails belonging to each boat having been out of them at the time of the wreck, and having gone down with the ship. This was an accident which there was no need to deplore, for we were too crowded from the first to admit of handling the boats properly, under their regular press of sail, in anything like rough weather.

Having made up my mind on what it was necessary to do, I addressed the men, and told them that any notion of holding longer on our course with the oars was manifestly out of the question, and dan-

gerous to all on board, as their own common sense might tell them, in the state to which the stoutest arms among us were now reduced. They looked round on each other as I said that, each man seeming to think his neighbor weaker than himself. I went on, and told them that we must take advantage of our present glimpse of moderate weather, and hoist the best sail we could set up, and drive before the wind, in the hope that it might please God to direct us in the way of some ship before it was too late. "Our only chance, my men," I said, in conclusion, "is

the chance of being picked up; and in these desolate seas one point of the compass is just as likely a point for our necessities as another. Half of you keep the boat before the sea, the other half bring out your knives, and do as I tell you." The prospect of being relieved from the oars struck the wandering attention of the men directly; and they said, "Aye, aye, sir!" with something like a faint reflection of their former readiness, when the good ship was under their feet, and the messcans were filled with plenty of wholesome food.

Thanks to Captain Raven-

der's forethought in providing both boats with a coil of rope, we had our lashings, and the means of making what rigging was wanted, ready to hand. One of the oars was made fast to the thwart, and well stayed fore and aft, for a mast. A large pilot-coat that I wore was spread; enough sail for us.

I had looked anxiously toward the surf-boat while we were rigging our mast and observed, with a feeling of great relief, that the men in her—as soon as they discovered what we were about—were wise enough to follow our example. They got on

faster than we did; being less put to it for room to turn round in. We set our sails as nearly as possible about the same time; and it was well for both boats that we finished our work when we did. At noon the wind began to rise again to a stiff breeze, which soon knocked up a heavy, tumbling sea. We drove before it in a direction north by east, keeping wonderfully dry, considering all things. The mast stood well; and the sail, small as it was, did good service in steadying the boat and lifting her easily over the seas. I felt the cold after the loss of my coat, but

not so badly as I feared; for the two men who were with me in the stern-sheets, sat as close as they could on either side of me, and helped with the warmth of their own bodies to keep the warmth in mine. Forward, I told off half a dozen of the most trustworthy of the men who could still muster strength enough to keep their eyes open, to set a watch, turn and turn about, on our frail rigging. The wind was steadily increasing; and if any accident happened to our mast the chances were that the boat would broach-to, and that every one of us would go to the bottom.

So we drove on—all through that day—sometimes catching sight of the surf-boat a little ahead of us—sometimes losing her altogether in the scud. How little and frail, how very different to the kind of boat that I had expected to see, she looked to my eyes now that I was out of her, and saw what she showed like on the waters for the first time! But to return to the long-boat. The watch on the rigging was relieved every two hours, and at the same regular periods all the brightest eyes left amongst us looked out for the smallest vestige of a sail

in view, and looked in vain. Among the passengers nothing happened in the way of a change—except that Miss Coleshaw seemed to grow fainter, and that Mrs. Atherfield got restless, as if she were waking out of her long dream about the Golden Lucy.

It got on toward sunset. The wind was rising to half a gale. The clouds, which had been heavy all over the firmament since noon, were lifting to the westward, and leaving there, over the horizon line of the ocean, a long strip of clear, pale, greenish sky, overhung by a cloud-bank whose ragged edges were tipped with

burning crimson by the sun. I did not like the look of the night, and, keeping where I was, in the forward part of the boat, I helped the men to ease the strain off our mast, by lowering the yard a little and taking a pull on the sheet, so as to present to the wind a smaller surface even of our small sail. Noting the wild look of the weather, and the precautions we were taking against the chance of a gale rising in the night– and being, furthermore, as I believe, staggered in their minds by the death that had taken place among them– three of the passengers strug-

gled up in the bottom of the boat, clasped their arms around me as if they were drowning men already, and hoarsely clamored for a last drink of water, before the storm rose and sent us all to the bottom.

"Water you shall have," I said, "when I think the time has come to serve it out. The time has not come yet."

"Water, pray!" they all three groaned together. Two more passengers who were asleep, woke up, and joined the cry.

"Silence!" I said. There are not two spoonfuls of fresh water left for each man in

the boat. I shall wait three hours more for the chance of rain before I serve that out. Silence, and drop back to your places!"

A Sail in Sight

They let go of me, but clamored weakly for water still; and, this time, the voices of some of the crew joined them. At this moment, to my great alarm, for I thought they were going mad and turning violent against me, I was seized round the neck by one of the men, who had been standing up holding on by the mast, and looking out

steadily to the westward.

I raised my right hand to free myself; but before I touched him, the sight of the man's face close to mine made me drop my arm again. There was a speechless, breathless, frantic joy in it, that made all the blood in my veins stand still in a moment.

"Out with it!" I said. "Man alive, out with it, for God's sake!"

His breath beat on my cheek in hot, quick, heavy gasps; but he could not utter a word. For a moment he let go of the mast, tightening his hold on me with the other arm, and pointed out west-

ward—then slid heavily down on to the thwart behind us.

I looked westward, and saw that one of the two trustworthy men whom I had left at the helm was on his feet looking out westward, too. As the boat rose, I fixed my eyes on the strip of clear greenish sky in the west, and on the bright line of the sea just under it. The boat dipped again before I could see anything. I squeezed my eyelids together to get the water out of them, and when we rose again looked straight into the middle of the bright sea-line. My heart bounded as if it would choke me—my tongue

felt like a cinder in my mouth—my knees gave way under me—I dropped down on to the thwart, and sobbed out, with a great effort, as if I had been dumb for weeks before, and had only that instant found my speech:

"A sail! a sail!"

The words were instantly echoed by the man in the stern-sheets.

"Sail-ho!" he screeched out, turning round on us, and swinging his arms about his head like a madman.

This made three of our company who had seen the ship already, and that one fact was sufficient to remove all

dread lest our eyes might have been deceiving us. The great fear now was not that we were deluded, but that we might come to some serious harm through the excess of joy among the people; that is to say, among such of the people as still had the sense to feel, and the strength to express what they felt. I must record in my own justification, after confessing that I lost command over myself altogether on the discovery of the sail, that I was the first who set the example of self-control. I was in a manner forced to this by the crew frantically entreating me to

lay-to until we could make out what course the ship was steering—a proceeding which, with the sea then running, with the heavy lading of the boat, and with such feeble substitutes for mast and sail as we possessed, must have been attended with total destruction to us all. I tried to remind the men of this, but they were in such a transport—hugging each other round the neck, and crying and laughing all in a breath—that they were not fit to listen to reason. Accordingly, I myself went to the helm again, and chose the steadiest of my two men in the after-part of the

boat as a guard over the sheet, with instructions to use force, if necessary, toward anyone who stretched out so much as a finger to it. The wind was rising every minute, and we had nothing for it but to scud, and be thankful to God's mercy that we had sea-room to do it in.

"It will be dark in an hour's time, sir," said the man left along with me when I took the helm again. "We have no light to show. The ship will pass us in the night. Lay-to, sir! For the love of Heaven, give us all a chance, and lay-to!" said he, and went down on his knees

before me, wringing his hands.

"Lay-to!" said I. "Lay-to, under a coat! Lay-to, in a boat like this, with the wind getting up a gale! A seaman like you talk in that way! Who have I got along here with me? Sailors who know their craft, or a pack of long-shore lubbers, who ought to be turned adrift in a ferry-boat on a pond?" My heart was heavy enough, God knows, but I spoke out as loud as I could, in the light way, to try and shame the men back to their proper senses. I succeeded at least in restoring silence; and that was something in such a condition as ours.

My next anxiety was to know if the men in the surf-boat had sighted the sail to the westward. She was still driving ahead of us, and the first time I saw her rise on the waves, I made out a signal on board—a strip of cloth fastened to a boat-hook. I ordered the man by my side to return it with his jacket tied on to the end of the oar; being anxious to see whether his agitation had calmed down and left him fit for his duty again. He followed my direction steadily and when he got his jacket on again, asked me to pardon him for losing his self-command, in a quiet,

altered voice.

I shook hands with him, and gave him the helm, in proof that my confidence was restored; then stood up and turned my face to the westward once again. I looked long into the belt of clear sky, which was narrowing already as the cloud-bank above sank over it. I looked with all my heart and soul and strength. It was only when my eyes could stand the strain on them no longer that I gave in, and sat down again by the tiller. If I had not been supported by a firm trust in the mercy of Providence, which had preserved us thus far, I am afraid

I should have abandoned myself at that trying time to downright hopeless, speechless despair.

It would not express much to any but seafaring readers if I mentioned the number of leagues off that I considered the ship to be. I shall give a better idea of the terrible distance there was between us, when I say that no landsman's eye could have made her out at all, and that none of us sailors could have seen her but for the bright opening in the sky, which made even a speck on the waters visible to a mariner's experienced sight all that weary way off.

When I have said this, I have said enough to render it plain to every man's understanding that it was a sheer impossibility to make out what course the ship was steering, seeing that we had no chance of keeping her in view at that closing time of day for more than another half-hour, at most. There she was, astern to leeward of us; and here were we, driving for our lives before the wind, with any means of kindling a light that we might have possessed on leaving our ship, wetted through long ago—with no guns to fire as signals of distress in the darkness—and with

no choice, if the wind shifted, but still to scud in any direction in which it might please to drive us. Supposing, even at the best, that the ship was steering on our course, and would overhaul us in the night, what chance had we of making our position known to her in the darkness? Truly, look at it anyhow we might from our poor mortal point of view, our prospect of deliverance seemed to be of the most utterly hopeless kind that it is possible to conceive.

The men felt this bitterly, as the cloud-bank dropped to the verge of the waters and the sun set redly behind it.

The moaning and lamenting among them was miserable to hear when the last speck and phantom of the ship had vanished from view. Some few still swore they saw her when there was hardly a flicker of light left in the west, and only gave up looking out and dropped down in the boat at my express orders. I charged them all solemnly to set an example of courage to the passengers, and to trust the rest to the infinite wisdom and mercy of the Creator of us all. Some murmured, some fell to repeating scraps out of the Bible and Prayer-Book, some wandered again in their

minds. This went on till the darkness gathered—then a great hush of silence fell drearily over passengers and crew; and the waves and the wind hissed and howled about us, as if we were tossing in the midst of them, a boat-load of corpses already!

An Anxious Night

Twice in the fore-part of the night the clouds overhead parted for a little, and let the blessed moonlight down upon us. On the first of those occasions, I myself served out the last drops of fresh water we had left. The two women—

poor suffering creatures!—were past drinking. Miss Coleshaw shivered a little when I moistened her lips with the water; and Mrs. Atherfield, when I did the same for her, drew her breath with a faint, fluttering sigh, which was just enough to show that she was not dead yet. The captain still lay as he had lain ever since I got on board the boat. The others, both passengers and crew, managed for the most part to swallow their share of the water—the men being just sufficiently roused by it to get up on their knees, while the moonlight lasted, and look about wildly over

the ocean for a chance of seeing the ship again. When the clouds gathered once more, they crouched back in their places with a long groan of despair. Hearing that, and dreading the effect of the pitchy darkness—to say nothing of the fierce wind and sea—on their sinking spirits, I resolved to combat their despondency, if it were still possible to contend against it, by giving them something to do. First I recommended that all who had the strength should join their voices at regular intervals and shout their loudest when the boat rose highest on the waves, on the

chance of that cry of distress being borne by the wind within hearing of the watch on board the ship. It is unnecessary to say that I knew well how near it was to an absolute impossibility that this last feeble exertion on our parts could lead to any result. I only proposed it because I was driven to the end of my resources to keep up the faintest flicker of spirit among the men.

They received my proposal with more warmth and readiness than I had ventured, in their hopeless state, to expect from them. Up to the turn of midnight they resolutely

raised their voices with me, at intervals of from five to ten minutes, whenever the boat was tossed highest on the waves. The wind seemed to whirl our weak cries savagely out of our mouths almost before we could utter them. I, sitting astern in the boat, only heard them, as it seemed, for something like an instant of time. But even that was enough to make me creep all over—the cry was so forlorn and fearful. Of all the dreadful sounds I had heard since the first striking of the ship, that shrill wail of despair—rising on the wavetops, one moment; whirled away,

the next, into the black night—was the most frightful that entered my ears. There are times, even now, when it seems to be ringing in them still.

Whether our first gleam of moonlight fell upon old Mr. Rarx while he was sleeping, and helped to upset his weak brains altogether, is more than I can say. But, for some reason or other, before the clouds parted and let the light down on us for the second time, and while we were driving along awfully through the blackest of the night, he stirred in his place, and began rambling and raving again

more vehemently than ever. To hear him now—that is to say, as well as I could hear him for the wind—he was still down in his gold-mine; but was laden so heavy with his precious metal that he could not get out, and was in mortal peril of being drowned by the water rising in the bottom of the shaft. So far, his maundering attracted my attention disagreeably, and did no more. But when he began—if I may say so—to take the name of the dear little dead child in vain, and to mix her up with himself and his miserly greed of gain, I got angry and called to the men forward to give

him a shake and make him hold his tongue. Whether any of them obeyed or not, I don't know—Mr. Rarx went on raving louder than ever. The shrill wind was now hardly more shrill than he. He swore he saw the white frock of our poor little lost pet fluttering in the daylight, at the top of the mine, and he screamed out to her in a great fright that the gold was heavy, and the water rising fast, and that she must come down as quick as lightning if she meant to be in time to help them. I called again angrily to the men to silence him; and just as I did so, the clouds began

to part for the second time, and the white tip of the moon grew visible.

"There she is!" screeched Mr. Rarx; and I saw him, by the faint light, scramble on his knees in the bottom of the boat and wave a ragged old handkerchief up at the moon.

"Pull him down!" I called out. "Down with him; and tie his arms and legs!"

Of the men who could still move about not one paid any attention to me. They were all upon their knees again, looking out in the strengthening moonlight for a sight of the ship.

"Quick, Golden Lucy!" screamed Mr. Rarx, and crept under the thwarts right forward into the bows of the boat. "Quick! my darling, my beauty, quick! The gold is heavy, and the water rises fast! Come down and save me, Golden Lucy! Let all the rest of the world drown, and save me! Me! me! me! me!"

He shouted these last words out at the top of his cracked, croaking voice, and got on his feet in the bows of the boat. Not one of the crew so much as looked round at him, so eagerly were their eyes seeking for the ship. The man sitting by me was

sunk in a deep sleep. If I had left the helm for a moment in that wind and sea, it would have been the death of every soul of us. I shouted desperately to the raving wretch to sit down. A screech that seemed to cut the very wind in two answered me. A huge wave tossed the boat's head up wildly at the same moment. I looked aside to leeward as the wash of the great roller swept by us, gleaming a lurid, bluish white in the moonbeams; I looked and saw, in one second of time, the face of Mr. Rarx rush past on the wave, with the foam seething in his hair and the

moon shining in his eyes. Before I could draw my breath he was a hundred yards astern of us, and the night and the sea had swallowed him up and had hid his secret, which he had kept all the voyage, from our mortal curiosity, forever.

"He's gone! he's drowned!" I shouted to the men forward.

None of them took any notice; none of them left off looking out over the ocean for a sight of the ship. Nothing that I could say on the subject of our situation at that fearful time can, in my opinion, give such an idea of the extremity and the frightfulness of it, as the rela-

tion of this one fact. I leave it to speak by itself the sad and shocking truth, and pass on gladly to the telling of what happened next, at a later hour of the night.

After the clouds had shut out the moon again, the wind dropped a little and shifted a point or two, so as to shape our course nearer to the eastward. How the hours passed after that, till the dawn came, is more than I can tell. The nearer the time of daylight approached, the more completely everything seemed to drop out of my mind except the one thought of where the ship we had seen in the even-

ing might be when we looked for her with the morning light.

It came at last–that gray, quiet light which was to end all our uncertainty; which was to show us if we were saved, or to warn us if we were to prepare for death. With the first streak in the east, every one of the boat's company, except the sleeping and the senseless, roused up and looked out in breathless silence upon the sea. Slowly and slowly the daylight strengthened, and the darkness rolled off farther and farther before it over the face of the waters. The first pale flush

of the sun flew trembling along the paths of light broken through the gray wastes of the eastern clouds. We could look clearly—we could see far; and there, ahead of us—Oh! merciful, bountiful providence of God!—there was the ship!

I have honestly owned the truth, and confessed to the human infirmity under suffering of myself, my passengers, and my crew. I have earned, therefore, as I would fain hope, the right to record it to the credit of all, that the men, the moment they set eyes on the ship, poured out their whole heart in humble

thanksgiving to the Divine Mercy which had saved them from the very jaws of death. They did not wait for me to bid them do this; they did it of their own accord, in their own language, fervently, earnestly, with one will and one heart.

Safety at Last

We had hardly made the ship out—a fine brigantine, hoisting English colors—before we observed that her crew suddenly hove her up in the wind. At first we were at a loss to understand this; but as we drew nearer, we discov-

ered that she was getting the surf-boat, which had kept ahead of us all through the night, alongside of her, under the lee bow. My men tried to cheer when they saw their companions in safety, but their weak cries died away in tears and sobbing.

In another half-hour we, too, were alongside of the brigantine.

From this point I recollect nothing very distinctly. I remember faintly many loud voices and eager faces—I remember fresh, strong, willing fellows, with a color in their cheeks, and a smartness in their movements that seemed

quite preternatural to me at that time, hanging over us in the rigging of the brigantine, and dropping down from her sides into our boat–I remember trying with my feeble hands to help them in the difficult and perilous task of getting the two poor women and the captain on board–I remember one dark hairy giant of a man swearing that it was enough to break his heart, and catching me in his arms like a child–and from that moment I remember nothing more with the slightest certainty for over a week of time.

When I came to my own

senses again, in my cot on board the brigantine, my first inquiries were naturally for my fellow-sufferers. Two—a passenger in the long-boat, and one of the crew of the surf-boat—had sunk in spite of all the care that could be taken of them. The rest were likely, with time and attention, to recover. Of those who have been particularly mentioned in this narrative, Mrs. Atherfield had shown signs of rallying the soonest; Miss Coleshaw, who had held out longer against exhaustion, was now the slower to recover. Captain Ravender, though slowly mending, was

still not able to speak or to move in his cot without help. The sacrifices for us all which this good man had so nobly undergone, not only in the boat, but before that, when he had deprived himself of his natural rest on the dark nights that preceded the wreck of the *Golden Mary*, had sadly undermined his natural strength of constitution. He, the heartiest of all, when we sailed from England, was now, through his unwearying devotion to his duty and to us, the last to recover, the longest to linger between life and death.

My next questions, when

they helped me on deck to get my first blessed breath of fresh air, related to the vessel that had saved us. She was bound to the Columbia River–a long way to the northward of the port for which we had sailed in the *Golden Mary.* Most providentially for us, shortly after we had lost sight of the brigantine in the shades of the evening, she had been caught in a squall, and had sprung her foretopmast badly. This accident had obliged them to lay-to for some hours, while they did their best to secure the spar, and had warned them, when they continued

on their course, to keep the ship under easy sail through the night. But for this circumstance we must, in all human probability, have been too far astern when the morning dawned, to have had the slightest chance of being discovered.

Excepting always some of the stoutest of our men, the next of the long-boat's company who was helped on deck was Mrs. Atherfield. Poor soul! when she and I first looked at each other, I could see that her heart went back to the early days of our voyage, when the Golden Lucy and I used to have our game of

hide-and-seek round the mast. She squeezed my hand as hard as she could with her wasted trembling fingers, and looked up piteously in my face, as if she would like to speak to little Lucy's playfellow, but dared not trust herself—then turned away quickly and laid her head against the bulwarks, and looked out upon the desolate sea that was nothing to her now but her darling's grave. I was better pleased when I saw her later in the day, sitting by Captain Ravender's cot; for she seemed to take comfort in nursing him. Miss Coleshaw soon afterwards got strong enough to

relieve her at this duty; and, between them, they did the captain such a world of good, in both body and spirit, that he also got strong enough before long to come on deck, and to thank me, in his old, generous, self-forgetful way, for having done my duty– the duty which I had learned how to do by his example.

Hearing what our destination had been when we sailed from England, the captain of the brigantine, who had treated us with the most unremitting attention and kindness, and had been warmly seconded in his efforts for our good by all the people under

his command, volunteered to go sufficiently out of his course to enable us to speak the first Californian coasting-vessel sailing in the direction of San Francisco. We were lucky in meeting with one of these sooner than we expected. Three days after parting from the kind captain of the brigantine, we, the surviving passengers and crew of the *Golden Mary*, touched the firm ground once more, on the shores of California.

We were hardly collected here before we were obliged to separate again. Captain Ravender, though he was hardly yet in good traveling

trim, accompanied Mrs. Atherfield inland, to see her safe under her husband's protection. Miss Coleshaw went with them, to stay with Mrs. Atherfield for a little while before she attempted to proceed with any matters of her own which had brought her to this part of the world. The rest of us, who were left behind with nothing particular to do until the captain's return, followed the passengers to the gold-diggings. Some few of us had enough of the life there in a very short time. The rest seemed bitten by old Mr. Rarx's mania for gold, and

insisted on stopping behind when Rames and I proposed going back to the port. We two and five of our steadiest seamen were all the officers and crew left to meet the captain on his return from the inland.

He reported that he had left Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw safe and comfortable under Mr. Atherfield's care. They sent affectionate messages to all of us, and especially, I am proud to say, to me. After hearing this good news, there seemed nothing better to do than to ship on board the first vessel bound for England. There

were plenty in port, ready to sail and only waiting for the men belonging to them who had deserted to the gold-diggings. We were all snapped up eagerly, and offered any rate we chose to set on our services—all, I ought to have said, except Captain Ravender, who went along with us in the capacity of passenger only.

Nothing of any moment occurred on the voyage back. The captain and I got ashore at Gravesend safe and hearty, and went up to London as fast as the train could carry us, to report the calamity that had occurred to the owners

of the *Golden Mary.* When that duty had been performed, Captain Ravender went back to his own house at Poplar, and I traveled to the West of England to report myself to my old father and mother.

Here I might well end all these pages of writing; but I cannot refrain from adding a few more sentences, to tell the reader what I am sure he will be glad to hear. In the summer-time of this present year eighteen hundred and fifty-six, I happened to be at New York, and having spare time on my hands, and spare cash in my pocket, I walked into one of the biggest

and grandest of their ordinaries there, to have my dinner. I had hardly sat down at table, before whom should I see opposite but Mrs. Atherfield, as bright-eyed and pretty as ever, with a gentleman on her right hand, and on her left—another Golden Lucy! Her hair was a shade or two darker than the hair of my poor little pet of past sad times; but in all other respects the living child reminded me so strongly of the dead that I quite started at the first sight of her. I could not tell if I was to try, how happy we were after dinner, or how much we had

to say to each other. I was introduced to Mrs. Atherfield's husband, and heard from him, among other things, that Miss Coleshaw was married to her old sweetheart, who had fallen into misfortunes and errors, and whom she was determined to set right by giving him the great chance in life of getting a good wife. They were settled in America, like Mr. and Mrs. Atherfield—these last and the child being on their way, when I met them, to visit a friend living in the northernmost part of the States.

With the relation of this circumstance, and with my

personal testimony to the good health and spirits of Captain Ravender the last time I saw him, ends all that I have to say in connection with the subject of the wreck of the *Golden Mary*, and the great deliverance of her people at sea.